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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**May is Mental Health Month**  
*May 8 is Children's Mental Health Awareness Day*

BLOOMINGTON, IL- The McLean County Health Department joins with Mental Health America in celebrating *May is Mental Health Month*. The theme of this year's public awareness campaign -- *Addressing Mental Health Before Stage 4* -- calls attention to the importance addressing mental health symptoms early, identifying potential underlying diseases, and planning an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health.

Did you know that the average person is more likely to encounter someone experiencing an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack? Approximately 1 in 5 Americans is estimated to have a diagnosable mental disorder such as depression, anxiety, or substance abuse in any given year. Since a person's overall well-being is tied to the balance that exists between emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health, poor mental health can significantly harm a person's general health. Just as everyone fits on a spectrum of health – ranging from poor to excellent – everyone fits on a spectrum of mental health. Identifying symptoms early can make it easier to treat and prevent more serious issues.

One way the health department is raising awareness and helping to reduce the stigma often associated with mental health conditions is through the presentation of both Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings. These trainings are open to the public and teach a 5-step action plan that participants can follow to offer initial help to people showing the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or crisis. The trainings also identify community service providers that participants can contact to connect people exhibiting mental health symptoms with the appropriate care.



**-MORE-**

The next Mental Health First Aid training is focused on Adults and will be held:

Date: Thursday, May 21st from 8:00 a.m. until 4:45 p.m.

Location: McLean County Health Department, 200 West Front Street, Bloomington

Fee: \$10.00 (includes book and lunch)

Register at: <http://bit.ly/1bJY8W9>

Lunch is provided by the All Our Kids Early Childhood Network

Course materials and snacks made possible by a grant from the Women to Women Giving Circle of the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation

Course instructors provided courtesy of McLean County Center for Human Services

The Mental Health First Aid trainings are part of a collaborative community health effort involving participation from the McLean County Health Department, Advocate Bromenn Medical Center, Chestnut Health Systems, the McLean County Center for Human Services, the Central Illinois Area Health Education Center, and the Regional Office of Education #17. A grant from the Women to Women Giving Circle of the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation to help with coordinating the trainings, is allowing the health department to keep the registration fee low.

*May is Mental Health Month* was started 66 years ago by Mental Health America, to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of good mental health for everyone. Mental Health America has online screening tools for depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder at [www.mhascreening.org](http://www.mhascreening.org). MHA's goal is to get every American screened and aware of their mental health, so they can address it B4Stage4. For more information on May is Mental Health Month, visit Mental Health America's website at [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may).

For information about Mental Health First Aid or other public health services and topics, contact the McLean County Health Department at <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov> or call 309-888-5450.

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